

A cheetah is sitting in a grassy field, looking towards the camera. It is positioned in the lower half of the frame, with its body angled slightly to the left. The cheetah's fur is light-colored with dark spots. To the left of the cheetah, there is a small tree with green leaves. The background is a blurred landscape of green grass and trees.

Masai Mara

A Travelogue of

WILDLIFE



Arnav Venkatesh

MASAI MARA

A Travelogue of Wildlife



Arnav Venkatesh

Amulya Pustaka

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A Travelogue of Wildlife

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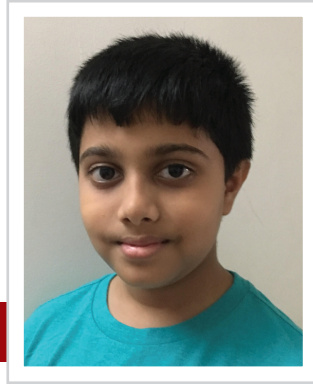
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About the Author

Arnav was born in Bangalore, India in 2008. He is currently studying in National Hill View Public School at Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bangalore. He is the only son of Venkatesh S.N and Seemanthini Venkatesh.

Arnav loves reading and playing badminton. His interest in music has made him an avid keyboardist. He has immense love for animals which led him to experience this journey through wild life. He has also written many poems and wishes to make a mark in the world of literature.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my parents and grandparents who have supported me throughout while writing this book.

My special thanks to my paternal Ajji who sowed the seed of jotting down my travel experience.

A mountain of gratitude to my maternal grandfather without whom I could not have brought life to this book.

And I would like to extend my thanks to all my teachers of National Hill View Public School for encouraging and guiding me in all means.

I'm grateful to the Mr. Krishna Chennagadi, Mr. Amith Kumar Jain and publishers of this book for beautifying my writing and making this book look appealing.

My personal thanks to Dr. H.S.Venkatesh Murthy and Mr. K.Sundaraj for writing kind words about this book.

And finally, many thanks to all the readers of this book for staying by my side always.

Foreword

My friend wanted me to go through the writing of his dear grandson, Chi Arnav Venkatesh, on his recent visit to Masai Mara, a game reserve in Kenya with his parents.

After going through his writing, which he calls a ‘travelogue’, I felt that the kid has tremendous potential of becoming a good writer in English. He is able to grasp the intricacies of a travel and to record with precision the things he sees and does in a travel.

Arnav is extremely sociable and humane in his dealings with the new acquaintances during travel. He acknowledges the help of their travel guide and calls his endearingly – “Peter Uncle” and he remembers the names of waiters, Dominic and Ambani, who subsequently become his friends.

Arnav looks at everything with certain innocence and surprise, which we often find among children, which makes his writing refreshingly original. May it be ‘the big five’ in Kenya – Lions, Elephants, Leopards, Rhinos and Buffalos, or the ‘pride of lion’, or the birds that he incidentally sees, there is a sense of awe, surprise and happiness at seeing something that he had not seen before.

I found Arnav making most his observations on the fauna of the land rather than the flora from a distance. The Kenyan reserve has rich vegetation too. That would encourage him to look at the details of the wild life in all their delicacies and write about them.

This is the first and a great attempt of the ten-year old. He should be lauded for his effort. May God bless him.

Dr. K. Sundara Raj
Renowned Academician



Wildebeest at the Masai Mara

MASAI MARA

A Travelogue of Wildlife

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A waterbuck which was seen at Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort

Chapter – 1

TRAVELLING

People travel for a reason. And that is to discover the legends & wonders of different places globally. Travelling makes our minds bigger. There are different places with different wonders. You can never cover them all. A question haunts me always as to which is the best place you can ever travel to? That you can never answer. So, what we all do is travel to the best place we can think of, to discover if it is so. The best place which we could think of going this summer was Kenya and visit Masai Mara.



Pelicans flying near Lake Nakuru

Chapter – 2

KENYA CALLING

As it was decided to go to Kenya, I was very curious about the place, people, currency etc. The travel was booked through a travel agency named ‘Magical Retreats & Adventures’. We booked the flight tickets. As it was a connector flight, we had to land at Dubai first and then to Kenya. Packing took quite a long time for us as we had to take 2 big suitcases. Our flight was on 5th May. 4th May night was very nervous for us because we had to be at the airport at 12 am. We ate dinner fast before 8.30pm and slept for a while. We woke up at 10.30pm and our journey started.

We were all ready at 11 pm. We hired an airport taxi. It took us almost 45 minutes to reach the airport. The counter was open & we went to take our boarding passes. Next, we were off to the security check. They stamped our passports and we went to our gates. We were relieved as we were in time. Two hours got over just like that and they called for boarding. We sat in the plane which took off exactly at 3.30am. After a while the air hostess came & gave us food. It was tough to eat the idly as the croissant which I ate at the gate was still dancing in my tummy! I saw some movies on the screen and after a while we safely landed at Dubai Airport.



A Mara Giraffe in Lake Nakuru National Reserve

First as we landed, we went for the security check. They have a different system, they don't stamp boarding passes. We went near our gate & found a place to sit. After a while we went to Starbucks coffee. The coffee was very different from the Indian coffee. We spent a while seeing the stores of the ginormous Dubai Airport. After almost 120 mins of waiting they called for boarding. I was very excited!

It took us a long time to reach Jomo Kenyata International Airport at Nairobi (capital of Kenya). We were very tired. We exchanged Euros to Kenyan Shillings, and we went outside. There we saw our travel guide, Peter from Magical Retreats. He welcomed us by shaking hands & took us to the Great Rift Valley.



The gorgeous Great Rift Valley

Chapter – 3

GREAT RIFT VALLEY

We stopped at the Great Rift Valley which was on our way to our first hotel ‘Azure towers’*. It was a great view point. It starts from Lebanon & ends in Mozambique. We could get awesome pictures. We strolled over shops nearby. Most of the shops had woolen stuffing. I don’t know why? Soon it was time to leave to Azure Towers. It took us almost an hour to reach the hotel. The hotel looked very good.

*spelt : Az-ur-e



The Hippos at Lake Naivasha

Chapter – 4

LAKE NAIVASHA

We washed up & ate things that we had brought from India. We spent a good night at Azure Towers. The next day Peter uncle was ready to take us to Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort. It was a very long and comfortable journey. We reached the resort. We were just amazed as we saw Water Bucks, Zebras, Giraffes & Monkeys patrolling our hotel!! We asked the receptionist “How did the animals come here?” She replied, “We have built our hotel in such a place like this, where harmless wild animals reside”. We saw many animals just through our windows. We asked an escort to take us & show us all the animals and we could take some great pictures. At last he took us to the hotels view point of the Lake Naivasha. Far from the view point we could see Hippos. The guard told us that they were the main attraction at Naivasha, and they would come near our villas in the night to eat grass! The lunch was not great as our tongues still has not adjusted to African food.



Mount Longonut seen through the Lake Naivasha

That day at, 2pm Peter uncle was ready to take us for a drive to the boat riding camp at Lake Naivasha as it was not available at our hotel. When we reached, a person escorted us to the boats. We had to wear life jackets which were very uncomfortable. Just as we started the boat ride, we saw so many hippos. We went near them & took some pictures. We even saw many birds. After a while of seeing only birds we saw the Croissant island which surrounded us. And we even saw the Mount Longonut. It was really huge. Finally, after seeing a Mara Giraffe, the boat ride ended. We headed back to the hotel. We spent the rest of the night in the hotel itself.



Topi spotted at Masai Mara

Chapter – 5

MASAI MARA

The next day we were ready to go to our next hotel 'Azure Mara Haven', we would be staying there for 2 days. It took a while to reach a road nicknamed 'African Massage'. We can identify what it means just by the name: The worst road in Africa! It was the only way to reach our hotel & visit the Masai Mara. It was good that our vehicle had 4-wheel drive. Though having 4-wheel drive, it was my worst nightmare ever! Finally, at a puking stage we reached the hotel. We checked in, took some rest & went for lunch. There were 2 waiters, Dominic & Ambani who eventually became our friends. The lunch was pretty good. There were only 2 problems in the hotel; 1. No electricity till 6 pm. 2. No WIFI in rooms. It had to be like this because that place was more a tribal area. That area is known as the Mara village. The hotel was right next the Masai Mara National Reserve, so it was easy for us to go there. The same day at 4 pm we went to the Masai Mara National Reserve. Just as we entered, we saw many Gazelles. We went through & saw a strange animal called Topi, which is not found in India. It was very strange looking. They were always in a herd.



Herd of Elephants and Buffaloes

I had learnt about the 'Big Five' found in Kenya from my father. Those are Lions, Elephants, Leopards, Rhinos & Buffalos. I really wanted to see them all! We saw many zebras also. For a while we could only see the beautiful landscape. Later Peter uncle got to know through the radio that there were some Cheetahs around. We went there. We were surprised to see 5 Cheetahs!! Peter uncle said that they are brothers. Their mother left them when they were little. They were together from that day onwards. They were all sleeping. We waited for them to get up. Finally, some of them got up, it was nice to see them. We spent a few minutes strolling around. Peter uncle found out that there was a pride of lions somewhere. We were very excited! We went there and only saw female lions. We were not very satisfied. We took some pictures. Soon it was time to head back to the hotel to prepare for the next day. The next day we would be at the Masai Mara for the whole day. We rested that night completely.

Next day we were ready to go to the Masai Mara again. We went and first saw zebras. Then we saw a rare animal, Wildebeest. We also saw many birds including the Kori Bustard. We also saw herds of Buffalos and Elephants. This was the first time we ever saw 2 of the big fives together. It was so amazing! Both the herds had young ones. So, we had finished seeing 3 of the Big Fives. Though one was a female lion I think it can also be counted. I also wished I could see a male lion. We left that place, while going, we



The Lion King

saw a pack of Hyenas happily resting under a shade. There were also many Ostriches nearby. Moving forward we again saw those 5 cheetahs. This time they were planning to hunt a Topi. But may be, because all the vehicles had surrounded them, they were shy to attack, as Cheetahs are very shy animals. Next, we reached the Kenya Tanzania Border. To identify they had only placed a boulder separating Kenya and Tanzania.

Later we went to our picnic point, The Mara River. It was almost 12 pm. We were hungry! But first we took a walk to see the river. The river was very beautiful. It is said that the migration of the wildebeests from Tanzania to Kenya happen at the Mara River itself. This river's main attraction was the migration, hippos & crocodiles. We went back to our picnic point to eat. We ate the food that the waiters of the Azure Mara Haven, Dominic & Ambani had packed for us. Soon we headed back to our hotel. As we were going, we spotted a lions' pride. I really wanted to see a male lion. This time my wish came true. The lion, lioness & the cubs were sitting royally like kings & queens. Finally, after waiting they got up and moved to another place. I could take very good pictures. We headed back to the hotel. It was a very long day.



Rhinos at Lake Nakuru

Chapter – 6

LAKE NAKURU

The next day we left for the Lake Nakuru National Reserve where the rhinos (one of the big fives) & other animals reside. Besides Rhinos it is said that the Lake has many resident flamingos also. To go there we had to cross the African Massai again. After a 4-hour stressful journey we reached the reserve. The reserve was not as big as the Masai Mara, but it was good. The most exciting thing was that we could see the whole reserve just through the balcony of our room as our hotel Lake Nakuru Sopa Resort was right next to the reserve. That day was cloudy. After lunch we were ready for our game drive to see lake Nakuru, Rhinos & Flamingos. Suddenly, at some point it started raining. Far we could see some rhinos. But it was not clear enough. We could not see Lake Nakuru as it started raining cats & dogs. We went back to our hotel. We planned for next day that we would see Lake Nakuru & then go the airport.

Next day we packed, ate breakfast & got ready for our game drive. I wished I could see a leopard. We saw many buffaloes and impalas in the reserve. We headed towards the lake. On our way we could see many rhinos. We got out of our vehicle to see the Flamingos. There were so many of them. It was so beautiful. We kept strolling around. We saw some buffaloes and many birds. Even that day was cloudy, but it didn't rain. Next, we headed back to the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.



Flamingos at Lake Nakuru

Chapter – 7

HOME SWEET HOME

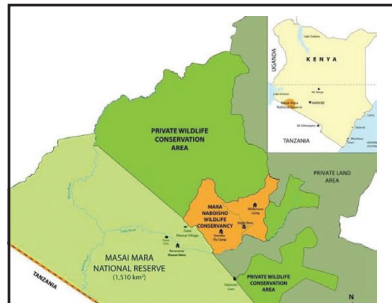
At the Airport we ate something, next we went to take our boarding passes. After this we went for boarding. The flight was good. I saw some movies on the screen. We landed at Dubai Airport at 9 pm.

Our next flight to Bangalore was at 3 am. We had to sleep at the airport itself. I did not get to know what happened around in that period of time, as I was sleeping. My mother woke me at 2.30 am. We boarded the plane. It took us a while to reach Bangalore. We landed safely in our home town. We hired a taxi and went home. I'd say this travel was worth it.

THE END

Extension Information on Kenya

Kenya is a country in East Africa. It encompasses Savannah, Lake Lands, the dramatic Great Rift valley & Mountain highlands. It is also home to wildlife like the lions, Rhinos etc. From Nairobi its capital, Safaris visit the Masai Mara Reserve known for its annual Wildebeest Migration.



CAPITAL: Nairobi

NATIONAL LANGUAGE: Swahili

PRESIDENT: Uhuru Kenyatta

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: William Kuto

CURRENCY: Kenyan Shillings (KES)

MAIN ATTRACTIONS: Great Rift Valley, Masai Mara, Nakuru National Park, Amboseli National Park



A little boy attempting to write a travelogue is really interesting. Arnnav does it effortlessly using simple but evocative language. To write something is to make a thing seen outside, of his own.

I am deeply impressed by Arnnav's refreshing and evocative use of language. I take this opportunity to wish the child a great future.

Dr. H. S.Venkateshamurthy

Eminent poet and National awardee for Children Literature

